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NOTES ON THE ORNITHOLOGY OF NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

BY THE RIGHT HON. LORD LILFORD.

I RESUME my notes from my last date on this subject, June 3rd, 1885 (Zool. 1885, p. 259).

June 30th.—Heard from my head gamekeeper that one of his men had discovered some young Pied Woodpeckers, *Picus major*, in a dead branch of a fir-tree in a large wood near this house. I note this, as, although this Woodpecker is not very rare in our neighbourhood, we seldom meet with its nest.

August 4th.—We this day found two nests of Reed Warblers, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus*, on the banks of our river, containing respectively three and four eggs. The first nest was not, as usual, placed amongst stems of growing reed, or, as we occasionally meet with it, in upright growing branches of willow, but was suspended between three of the thick pith-rushes, locally known as “bolders,” and much used for basket-making. This is the first instance of the birds choosing these plants as a nesting-place that has ever come to our knowledge, and strikes us as all the more remarkable from the fact of the abundance of reeds within a few yards of this singularly situated nest.

Aug. 12th.—First Snipe, *Scolopax gallinago*, of the season seen in this neighbourhood.

Aug. 13th.—We noticed an adult Hobby, *Falco subbuteo*, close to this house.

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Aug. 15th.—A young Cuckoo, *Cuculus canorus*, observed "hawking" over the river in pursuit of insects, after the manner of the Nightjar.

Aug. 22nd.—A Barn Owl, *Strix flammea*, noticed by us flying to and fro over a meadow near this house, in broad daylight and sunshine, about 3 and 4 p.m.

Aug. 24th.—Our usual harvest-time invasion of Sparrow-hawks, *Accipiter nisus*, seems to have set in; one of the gamekeepers brought in two young females shot this morning, and reports of a sudden appearance of this species in some numbers reach us from all parts of the neighbourhood. A singularly fine adult male was killed by another of our gamekeepers on 28th inst.

Aug. 25th.—We observed what may fairly be termed a flock of Song Thrushes, *Turdus musicus*, certainly not less than sixty or seventy, collected in a small willow-bed close to this house.

Aug. 28th.—My friend Lieut.-Col. L. H. Irby told me that a Snipe committed suicide on Wadenhoe mill-stream by decapitating itself against some linked scythe-blades with which the water-weeds were being cut.

Aug. 26th to 30th.—Sand Martins, *Cotyle riparia*, by no means a very abundant species in this immediate neighbourhood, appeared in great numbers about our river close to this house, between the dates given above.

September 2nd.—We saw the first Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla melanope*, of the season at Lilford Locks.

Sept. 4th.—The first Peregrine, *Falco peregrinus* (female) of the season, seen by one of our gamekeepers to cut down a Partridge on Pilton; the same keeper reports having repeatedly noticed a Hobby lately in the Aldwinkle district.

Sept. 29th.—Starlings, *Sturnus vulgaris*, in small flocks very busy at the elder-berries, which are remarkably abundant this autumn in our neighbourhood.

October 1st.—The first Ring Ouzel, *Turdus torquatus*, of the season seen near Lilford Reservoir.

Oct. 2nd.—We noticed the first evidently migrating flock of stranger Wood Pigeons, *Columba palumbus*.

Oct. 9th.—Heard for the first time this season the well-known chatter of the Fieldfare, *Turdus pilaris*; this is an unusually early occurrence of this species in this district.

Oct. 12th.—The first Teal, *Anas crecca*, of the season, shot by my son near Aldwinkle. I cannot look upon this as the earliest seasonal occurrence of the Teal with us this year, as we generally meet with a few in September, and not rarely in August, but their favourite haunts had not been lately invaded by any of us, and the above is the first appearance that has come to my knowledge this autumn.

Oct. 15th.—The first Grey Crow, *Corvus cornix*, of the season positively identified, but I feel very little doubt about having heard one of these birds some three days ago. A Twite, *Linota flavirostris*, taken alive by a birdcatcher near Thorpe Achurch.

Oct. 20th.—The first Woodcock, *Scolopax rusticola*, of the season reported to us as seen within a very short distance of this house.

Oct. 21st.—A Mealy Redpoll, *Linota linaria*, taken alive by birdcatcher near this place; I consider this species as an exceedingly rare visitor to this district. We heard to-day, from the Hon. Thomas Fitzwilliam, a most circumstantial account of his having seen at very close quarters, near Milton, two birds, which from his description must have been Little Owls, *Carine noctua*; Mr. Fitzwilliam was uncertain as to the date of this occurrence, but thought it was about ten years ago.

November 3rd.—A pair of Pintails, *Anas acuta*, reported to us as frequenting our home and decoy ponds.

Nov. 14th.—About two days before this date a Red-throated Diver, *Colymbus septentrionalis*, was picked up alive near Pytchley, and brought to Mr. J. Field, of Kettering, who informed me by letter of the occurrence, but called the bird a Great Northern Diver; the specimen was, however, examined shortly afterwards by the Rev. H. Slater, who kindly told me that it was a fine example of *C. septentrionalis* in winter dress.

Nov. 20th.—About this day a bird, which was reported to me as an "Eagle," was seen by one of our gamekeepers near this house; from subsequent accounts given by others who saw this *rara avis* we have no doubt that it was a Rough-legged Buzzard, *Buteo lagopus*. This individual haunted our neighbourhood for some weeks after the above date.

Nov. 28th.—I received a letter from the Rev. H. Slater, informing me that he had seen, at a birdstuffer's shop in Wellingborough, an adult specimen of the Arctic Tern, *Sterna macrura*,

and was assured that the bird in question was killed early in August last, near Sharnbrook Beds. In the same letter Mr. Slater told me that a Wood Sandpiper, *Totanus glareola*, was shot on Irchester Brook shortly before Nov. 20th.

December 2nd.—Under this date Mr. Slater wrote to me that he had recently visited the shop of Mr. J. Field, of Kettering, and seen, amongst other birds, the following species, which are of some local interest; no dates and few precise localities were given, but Mr. Slater was informed that all the birds had been obtained in the neighbourhood of Kettering:—Seven Snow Buntings, *Plectrophanes nivalis*, “in dusky dress of late autumn.” Quail, *Coturnix vulgaris*, picked up between Kettering and Rothwell. Hoopoe, *Upupa epops*, “obtained near Brigstock”; this is without doubt the specimen recorded by me in ‘The Zoologist,’ 1885, p. 259. Bar-tailed Godwit, *Limosa lapponica*, “in full winter dress”; this is the only record that has reached me of the occurrence of this species in our county.

Dec. 18th.—White-fronted Goose, *Anser albifrons*; a solitary individual of this species clearly identified by Lieut.-Col. Irby on one of our meadows near Achurch.

January 30th, 1886.—Water Ouzel, *Cinclus aquaticus*, “shot in Broughton field, near Kettering,” reported to me by Mr. J. G. Field, of Kettering, of whom I subsequently purchased the specimen—a very fine one—and presented it to the Northampton Museum.

April 26th.—I received, through Lieut.-Col. Irby, three adult specimens of Black Tern, *Hydrochelidon fissipes*, shot near Lilford by one of our gamekeepers from a flock of about thirty on 24th inst.

July 13th.—On the evening of this day an adult Night Heron, *Nycticorax griseus*, was clearly seen and identified by my friend last named on the banks of our river not far from Aldwinkle. This bird was frequently seen and reported to me by several persons worthy of credence at intervals from the above date till Sept. 6th; on this last occasion my informant, who had often seen the bird, declares that it had a companion of the same species.

July 28th.—On this day a party of three friends, accompanied by my falconer, went on an insect-collecting expedition to a large wood at no great distance from this house; knowing

that the Hobby, *Falco subbuteo*, frequently bred in the locality, I particularly begged them to try to find a nest. They had hardly entered the wood when they heard the cry of the old Hobbies, and one of the party, after some search, descried an old nest of Carrion Crow, to which the falconer climbed, and therein found three young Hobbies, which he considered as rather too young for taking at the moment; but, as the wood in question is virtually unpreserved, and much frequented by entomologists and loafers of all sorts, I sent him up again on the 31st, and he brought the young birds home to me. They seemed to be strong and healthy, and we put them out "to hack" in the park, but on taking them up they began to droop one after another, so I turned them adrift again. They remained about the park for a short time, but all took their departure before the middle of September.

Landrails, *Crex pratensis*, seem to be unusually abundant with us this year, and reports reached me of their being heard "craking" every night till nearly the middle of August. It is probable that this unwonted continuance of what is undoubtedly the pairing or love-call of this species may have been caused by the destruction of many eggs in the heavy floods of May last; a nest of eggs hard-set was brought to me on August 9th, and a young bird not very long hatched, caught in one of our meadows shortly afterwards. In connection with these late broods, I may mention that my son and two friends met with seven Landrails on October 12th in a piece of strong seed-clover. We seldom hitherto have met with more than an odd one or two in this neighbourhood after the end of September, though in most seasons our meadows are alive with them during the summer months.

The first Snipe, *Scolopax gallinago*, shot here this season fell on August 3rd. The decoy-man afterwards told me that he had seen two or three of these birds about the decoy-pool before this date. I look upon this species as an autumnal migrant to this immediate neighbourhood, though it occasionally has bred to my knowledge in the Nene Valley to the north of our property.

Colonel Irby, often before quoted, informed me that he saw an adult Common Tern, *Sterna fluvialis*, near Wadenhoe on August 10th.

The first Peregrine, *Falco peregrinus*, of the season was

reported to me about the last date, and has been frequently seen since.

A pair of Teal, *Anas crecca*, were seen by my son on the decoy-pool on Sept. 5th; the decoy-man told him that they had been there for some days, and about this time assured me that he had seen and heard several Whimbrels, *Numenius phæopus*, and a few Redshanks, *Totanus calidris*, over and about the meadows near the decoy.

Sept. 8th.—A Quail, *Coturnix communis*, was seen by Colonel Irby on the Wadenhoe Manor; this species, which was by no means very uncommon and occasionally bred near Lilford till within the last fifteen years, has of late become very scarce hereabouts, though I have reason to believe that it is found pretty frequently in the neighbourhood of Northampton.

The first Jack Snipe, *Scolopax gallinula*, of which I heard this autumn was reported to me by G. Edmonds, Esq., of Oundle, as shot by him in a meadow near that town on September 28th; he also informed me that he flushed a Woodcock, *S. rusticola*, on the same day; if he is not mistaken in this latter case, the bird was in all probability bred in the county.

Grey Wagtail, *Motacilla melanope*, first of the season, seen at Lilford Locks, Sept. 20th, but not reported to me till Oct. 3rd.

October 4th.—I heard a Tawny Owl, *Strix aluco*, hooting loudly shortly before 1 p.m., with a cloudless sky and bright sunshine. We have a great many of these and the Barn Owl in the park and pleasure close to the house, where, as in all places over which I can exercise any control, I have always done my best to prevent the destruction or molestation of these beautiful and most useful birds. In this connection I may mention that my falconer assured me that in a cavity of an old elm tree in the park, from which three young Tawny Owls had taken their first sally in April last, he found in the following month a Wild Duck's nest containing thirteen eggs, from which thirteen young Ducks were very soon afterwards hatched, and safely taken away by the parent bird or birds.

In reply to my enquiries, I received a letter from H. S. O'Brien, Esq., of Blatherwyche Park, Wansford, under date October 5th, 1886, in the following words:—"There have been two pairs of Great Crested Grebes on the water here all through the spring and summer of this year; two of them are still here.

I cannot, I am sorry to say, state positively that they have bred here, but my children have repeatedly told me that they have seen the old Grebe and two young ones." I may add that the piece of water above referred to is of several acres in extent, and, although bordered on one side by a high road, is much frequented by various wildfowl. The Great Crested Grebe occasionally visits our river in this neighbourhood during severe weather, but the above is the first intimation that I have received on good authority of its breeding in the northern division of our county, though I believe that of late years it has been found breeding on some of the large reservoirs in the southern division, as also in Rutland.

I may perhaps be allowed to explain the poverty and paucity of my notes on migratory birds by the facts that we were absent from home from the latter end of October, 1885, till July 1st, 1886, and that since the latter date my personal ornithological observations have been confined by my infirmities to such as are possible from a wheeled chair in the immediate neighbourhood of this house. I have heard of the death of a Redwing, *Turdus iliacus*, on Sept. 21st, and the appearance of this species "a few days previously;" also that the Grey Crow was heard about the beginning of October, and seen since that date; but in neither of these instances have I been able to arrive at positive certainty as to earliest occurrence.

ORNITHOLOGICAL NOTES FROM NORFOLK AND SUFFOLK FOR 1885.

By T. E. GUNN, F.L.S.

THE following notes, from October, 1884, to December, 1885, include the most noticeable ornithological occurrences, principally the results of personal observation.

As usual I have to notice one or more captures of the Peregrine Falcon. On the 2nd of January an adult pair were shot at Morton, near Norwich; the female, although severely wounded, managed to make her escape. Another adult female was sent in during the previous month, having been killed near

Wells on the 16th. This enabled me to particularly notice the relative proportions in the sexes when placed side by side.

	Male.	Female.
Weight	26 ozs.	40 ozs. avoird.
Total length (bill and tail included)	17 inches	20 inches
Full expanse of wings . . .	38 $\frac{3}{4}$ „	46 „
Wing from carpal joint . . .	12 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	14 $\frac{3}{4}$ „
Bill along ridge of upper mandible	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ „	1 $\frac{1}{8}$ „
Tail from tip to root	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	8 „
Tibia	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ „	4 „
Tarsus	2 $\frac{1}{8}$ „	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ „

The plumage of each was as nearly alike as possible. In the dissection of both I detected the presence of parasites, a circumstance I have invariably noticed in this species.

On December 17th last a local birdcatcher brought me a mature male Merlin, in good plumage, which he had caught in his nets at Cossey, near this city, during the afternoon, it having dashed in after his call-bird. This bird weighed five and a quarter ounces avoirdupois. Prof. Newton, in his edition of 'Yarrell's British Birds,' gives the weight of the adult male as six ounces; Montagu says five ounces; the latter authority, in my opinion, being more correct.

On May 25th I found a nestling of the Long-Eared Owl sitting on the end of a fallen spruce. It had apparently just left the nest. Two days after I made a careful search in the same spot, and found a second young one sitting very quiet and close on a top branch of a tall fir, but could see no signs of the nest or old birds. I found a dead chaffinch without head or tail at the foot of a tree close at hand, freshly killed, and dropped by one of the old birds. The young had their stomachs quite full. In one I found the remains of a Thrush, and in the other the remains of a Bank Vole, and as many as three adult Chaffinches. On the 28th, the following day, I made another long and careful search for the nest and rest of the young without success; they had all evidently left the nest and shifted to another part of the wood. I have repeatedly noticed how quiet young Hawks and Owls are when being supplied with food by the parents.

The Little Owl, *Noctua passerina*, from its singular habits and grotesque actions, has for some years been a favourite with

me. If taken from the nest when young it is easily reared, soon becoming very tame. I have kept some four and five years. In a state of nature their food consists principally of young birds, small mammals, and insects. In confinement, whenever any of the above are not easily procurable, I find that raw lean beef is a good substitute, of which it soon gets very fond, even preferring it to other food. I have occasionally varied its diet with beetles, moths, grasshoppers, butterflies, caterpillars, lizards, water-newts, and living as well as dead fish, such as minnows and small roach. Feathers and fur, as well as bones and other refuse, are (as usual with the Raptores) thrown up in pellets of an oblong shape. Mr. J. H. Gurney had a pair of these birds in confinement, in 1851, that nested, and laid four eggs about the middle of May. Two of these they soon broke, but hatched the other two early in June. These nestlings did not long survive, Mr. Gurney being unable to say how they disappeared; he is inclined to think the old birds devoured them. Although I have been the possessor of quite a number of Little Owls at different times, and rather successful in obtaining prizes for them as cage birds at bird shows, I was never fortunate enough to get them to nest until last spring, when a pair hatched and successfully reared their young in my aviary. The following are the notes I made concerning them:—Early in the autumn of 1884 I bought three pairs of these Owls in immature plumage, and placed them in a cage I had formed in a recess in my back garden. I had just previously received a nest of three young of *Strix otus*, one of which I sent away for want of room. One of the two remaining ones came to an untimely end by breaking a leg and wing in a fight. The odd bird soon fraternised with the new comers, which continued for some time, when the Long-Eared Owl and one of the most pugnacious of its companions had a pitched battle which resulted in the death of the latter. Soon after two of the little owls had a sharp set to, and another victim was added to the death-roll. On dissecting the latter I found its breast pierced all over; the sharp claws of its antagonist in some instances penetrating the breast-bone. I have never kept birds that show such pugnacity. Two combatants will oftentimes fasten their claws into each other with such ferociousness that even a fall from the branch to the floor of the cage will not cause them to loose their hold. In the month of March a pugna-

cious survivor commenced a series of combats, and so I put her in a separate cage. I had now remaining three Little Owls and the Long-Eared Owl. Two of the former now gave signs of being on affectionate terms with each other; and all through the following month (April) this pair of birds kept well together, or calling and answering each other throughout the day and night, frequently during the day mating on the floor of the cage. On May 19th, about 9 p.m., the female deposited her first egg on the floor. This I took out for fear of being broken. On May 20th I removed the third Little Owl from the cage, and, having made a nesting-place by covering a box about a foot square with some pieces of cork bark, leaving an entrance in the front near the top, I placed a few small sticks and some hay inside, and hung it at one of the top corners of the cage. On May 21st the pair immediately took possession, and the female, having selected one corner, and made a depression in the nesting material, deposited the second egg during the evening, both birds removing some of the sticks from the box. On May 22nd the male bird determined to have the cage to himself and partner, so engaged in a series of combats with the Long-Eared Owl, driving him about until he was compelled to take refuge by squeezing himself between the top of the nesting-box and roof of the cage. He seemed so intimidated by the fierce onsets of its smaller foe that he did not dare to leave even to get his food, so I relieved him of his anxiety, and let the pair have the cage entirely to themselves. I placed the first egg by the side of the other in the nest. The female seemed very busy in her nest for a short time, occasionally leaving and returning. Sometimes the pair were at home; the male generally kept guard, however, on a branch just outside, and would dart at any intruder with fury. On May 23rd, during the latter part of the day, the female kept closer to her nest, and in the evening deposited her third egg. On May 24th, as I entered the cage, the male bird flew into the box and barred the entrance by showing fight, and on removing him I found the female sitting hard on her three eggs, and unwilling to move when I touched her. On May 25th the female was sitting close, and left the nest a few minutes only in the evening. On the morning of May 26th I looked into the nest, expecting to find the fourth egg, but was disappointed; the female still sat close. She came off the eggs for a short time in

the evening, the cock bird being as pugnacious as ever. The fourth egg was laid about 9 p.m. On May 27th the hen was sitting close, the cock carrying her food, which he placed in the box by her side. On May 28th she was still busy in keeping her eggs warm, leaving for a few minutes in the evening to stretch her wings and legs, the male supplying food as usual. May 29th to 31st no change in the position of affairs. And from June 1st to 17th the male kept his watch as usual, the female only leaving for a few minutes in the evening either to procure food or to expand her pinions, until June 17th, when, about 9 p.m. an usual commotion was caused by the female bird on the nest. She emitted a low, chuckling noise for upwards of half an hour. The male, meanwhile, was flying to and from his perch to the nest in an agitated manner. On the following morning, June 18th, I found the first young bird had been hatched during the preceding evening, hence the agitation of the parents. I lifted the box from the nail very carefully, and, having removed the cock (he having flown in as usual at my entrance to the cage), the female allowed me to lift her from the nest to the other corner of the box, when I picked up the newly-hatched young bird, which had been squeaking at intervals all the morning. It was about the size of an ordinary walnut, and pure white in colour, resembling a ball of cotton-wool. I looked round for the empty shell, but found that it had been pounded by the old bird into minute fragments (this will probably account for the disappearance of the egg-shells of raptorial birds, which I have sometimes been puzzled to account for after the young are hatched). The male bird became more particular in the choice of food he carried to the nest; one sparrow he plucked entirely before conveyance, and another he neatly disjointed. During this evening, at the same hour as before, 9 p.m., the female made the same chuckling noise, and I therefore concluded a second young one was hatching. On the following morning, June 19th, I examined the nest and found she had the young well covered by one wing, the two remaining eggs being close under her. I noticed a few fragments of egg-shells on the bottom of the cage. Later in the afternoon the female made the same kind of noise, which was continued at intervals throughout the evening. I therefore looked into the nest at 9 a.m. the following day, June 20th, and found the third young one with

half the egg-shell still attached to it. On the morning of June 21st I saw the third young one quite hatched. All three nestlings had their eyes closed. The first one, hatched on the 17th, and now four days old, was, I found, much improved, showing a remarkable difference in size on comparison with the others. On June 23rd, the three young, being well nourished, were rapidly increasing in proportions; the fourth egg (probably the first one laid) I found was addled, so I removed it, blowing it for my cabinet. Seven or eight sparrows, or food in proportion to this bulk, was now daily consumed by the family. The young were still unable to open their eyes, lying in their nest, and asleep like little pigs, very fat and plump. Having to leave home for a time on business, my diary of daily events became interrupted, and therefore does not contain any details relating to the growth and development of the first plumage in July; and the assumption of the second plumage in October, which took place at the same time as that of the parent birds, and which are scarcely distinguishable from each other. Not having to work for their daily sustenance they became very fat, the parent birds weighing $8\frac{1}{4}$ oz. and 10 oz. respectively, the three young being $7\frac{3}{4}$, 8, and 8 oz. Six ounces is said to be the weight of this bird in a state of nature. The above is the weight of the living birds as scaled by myself on the 31st of December. A female adult bird (one of my odd ones), having died on Nov. 24th, weighed 10 ozs. This, I believe, is the first occasion on which this Little Owl has bred and successfully reared its young to maturity in confinement in England. I hope to record some further proceedings on the part of my pets in my next notes.

In the stomach of an adult female Short-Eared Owl, killed 27th October, 1884, I found the feathers, bones, and other remains of a young Thrush, including the gizzard, which, having been swallowed whole, was unaffected by the gastric juice. On October 29th I received four Long-Eared Owls, three males and a female; the former weighed respectively 8 oz. 8 dr., 8 oz. 10 dr., and 9 oz.; the female, 10 oz. Two of their stomachs were crammed with the bones and fur of Field Voles; in that of another were portions of the skulls of seven Voles, and a mass of refuse sufficient to form nearly a dozen pellets of the size usually cast up.

An immature female Black Redstart, killed at Blakeney 22nd

October, 1884, weighed 4 dr. The food had consisted of small beetles.

On September 17th, 1884, a male specimen of the Great Snipe was shot near Stalham, and, although exceedingly fat, weighed but $6\frac{1}{2}$ ozs. The gullet contained half a lobworm, and in the stomach I found four or five small white worms.

A Grey Phalarope was killed at Burgh St. Peter, in Great Yarmouth, on October 30th. Its stomach contained some small pebbles, two univalve shells, remains of a fly, and some vegetable refuse, including two pips not unlike those of the ordinary raisin, but much smaller.

At 6 a.m. on October 9th I took a walk on the Yarmouth Denes from Caistor to the Harbour's mouth. Large flocks of Twites were continually passing during the whole morning, sometimes alighting to feed on the seeds of various grasses and plants growing on the sandy soil; large numbers of Sky Larks, Meadow Pipits, and Starlings, were also constantly moving southwards. The local birdcatchers were apparently out in full force, and netted a great number of birds, principally Meadow Pipits, Lesser Redpolls, and Twites. The birdcatchers call the Twite the "French Linnet," to distinguish it, I presume, from our familiar Brown Linnet. I saw a solitary Golden Plover, a few Wheatears, and Grey Crows; these latter birds had probably just arrived. A female Ring Ouzel was killed the day before; also a brace of Woodcocks, being the first birds of the season in this neighbourhood.

Two Shore Larks and a Snow Bunting were shot on October 6th, and a few other Buntings seen, but this date is somewhat early for these two species to be over in any number. Two swallows passed southward, flying very low, and a single bird passed later on in the same direction. I also saw a solitary Short-Eared Owl.

An immature female Honey Buzzard was shot on September 17th, 1884, in Gunton Park, and sent to me the following day. During the last few years this bird has become almost a regular autumn visitor to the Eastern Counties, and (as in this instance) generally in its first year's plumage. Occasionally (as in 1882) one is killed in the plumage of second year. The last obtained measured 23 inches in length and 4 feet 4 inches across its fully expanded wings. Weight 1 lb. 14 oz. The bird proved

very plump in condition, and (as testified by the contents of its stomach and crop) had recently visited a bees' nest.

A male example of *Picus major* was shot near Norwich on October 23rd, 1884. The red of the vent extended over the abdomen, and was of a more brilliant tint than usual; there were also a few scarlet feathers on its chest, and several other feathers were tinged with the same hue; this is rather unusual, and, I am inclined to think, indicates age. In its stomach I found a spider and a large quantity of the white kernels of hazel nuts and a few pebbles. The presence of vegetable food of any kind in the stomach of a Woodpecker is (according to my experience) very unusual. Twenty years ago a somewhat similar instance came under my notice (Zool., 1865, p. 9468), the stomach of a Green Woodpecker which I examined in October being filled with oats and the fragments of two or three acorns. Naumaun states that acorns form an occasional article of diet with *Picus viridis*, and Bechstein asserts that this bird will crack nuts.

A cock Linnet (*Linota cannabina*) was brought to me on 8th May last which had just died, after living as a caged bird just seventeen years in the possession of a Mr. Lincoln of this city. I have kept Goldfinches from eight to ten years, and have known canaries to live even twenty years.

At page 480 of 'The Zoologist' for 1885 I recorded the capture of a female Roller near Norwich, and, having twenty years previously received a male bird, I have compared the two, with the following result:—The principal measurements were—In total length (beak and tail inclusive), male $12\frac{1}{2}$ in., female $13\frac{1}{4}$ in.; expanse of wing, male 25 in., female $25\frac{1}{2}$ in.; wing (from carpus), male $7\frac{5}{8}$ in., female $7\frac{3}{4}$ in.; bill to gape, male $1\frac{3}{4}$ in., female $1\frac{3}{4}$ in.; tail, male 5 in., female 5 in. The female, being slightly the larger of the two, weighed $4\frac{3}{4}$ ounces.

A Blackbird was shot at Fleggburgh, near Yarmouth, Dec. 8th, 1884, which had the head, neck, and under parts of a rufous brown; crown of head, back, wings, and tail of a brownish ash; bill and legs brown; irides pale brown. Another, in similar plumage, was killed at Narford, near Swafham, on 9th January, 1885; it had the tips of the primaries dirty white; bill deep yellow; irides paler brown than usual.

A white Sparrow was shot on the 16th October, 1885, at Banham, near Attleborough, and proved on dissection to be a male. It was not a true albino, however, the eyes being of a pale brown. The bill, legs, and toes pale brown. Two varieties of the Greenfinch were brought me by a local birdcatcher, who had netted them with others near Norwich in December, 1884, and January, 1885. They were exactly alike, and may have been from the same nest, as they were caught in localities not three miles apart. The plumage was of a pale uniform cinnamon colour, with pale green rump. Bill, eyes, and legs pale brown.

A pure white Skylark was caught on December 5th, 1885, in this neighbourhood, and was kept alive in an aviary with other birds. I have previously known, and have had in my possession, both white and albino varieties; also sandy coloured and piebald examples; and on one occasion a peculiar melanoid variety, which was also caught by a birdcatcher, neither the plumage nor feet showing any trace of previous confinement.

An old cock Blackbird with a white face was killed at Witchingham on the 28th of October.

Mr. Harward, jun., informed me (October 19th, 1885) that a Robin with a white crown had frequented his garden at Bracondale all the summer, and had mated with a bird of ordinary plumage. A nest was built in some ivy, and a brood of young were hatched which did not vary at all from the normal plumage.

A young hen Partridge was shot at Wells, on October 1st, having the entire plumage sprinkled with white feathers.

In the case of the Rook I have seen buff, cream-coloured, albino, and pied varieties, the last named by far the most common. The most singular variety I have seen (shot at Leiston, in Suffolk, in January, 1885) had the whole of the plumage a mauve tint, deeper in colour on its head, neck, breast, throat, thighs, and under parts generally. Irides pale brown; bill, legs, and feet deep brownish black.

The Jackdaw is much less subject to variation than the Rook. Two piebald varieties only have come under my notice, although I have heard of others both pied and white. On November 11th, 1885, a chocolate-coloured Jackdaw was shot at Middleton, near Lynn, and sent to me to preserve for the Lynn

Museum. It was a female bird, and had irides of a French grey; the back, upper wing coverts, crown of head, throat, and under parts, are chocolate. The usual grey mask is in this specimen of a slaty tint; primaries sandy brown, tipped and margined with grey; secondaries and tail-feathers sandy brown, with broader, greyish margins; the bill, legs, toes, and claws, dark chocolate.

An adult female Waterhen, of piebald colour, was caught by a fisherman in a marsh drain at Drayton, near Norwich, and brought to me alive on December 5th, 1885. A peculiarity in the colour of the irides of this bird was remarkable, one eye being of a deep red, the other hazel. Mr. Booth tells me he has seen a Great Crested Grebe which had eyes of different colours, a peculiarity in bird life seldom noticed.

The Waterhen, although so common in the eastern counties, is subject to but little variation in colour. I have seen but two piebald examples in addition to the two sandy ones already recorded.

Two very large Partridges, both cock birds, were killed in October, 1885, weighing 19 and 19½ ounces, that is three or four ounces heavier than usual.

The Eider Duck is of rare occurrence on the Norfolk coast, but has been met with on three occasions to my knowledge. In the latest instance an immature female was shot at Burgh St. Peter on December 30th, 1884, and weighed 2 lbs.

A fine male Gadwall was killed at Merton November 11th, 1885, and an immature male Long-tailed at Moulton, October 23rd, 1885.

A fine male Spotted Redshank was killed on the marshes at Burton Turf in August, 1885, and sent me by a friend; weight 4 oz. 6 dr. avoirdupois.

In the month of August an unusual number of Wood Sandpipers made their appearance, and were shot in various localities. I had a male on the 13th, a second on the 17th, another on the 23rd, and a male, killed at Thuxton on the 28th, and lastly a female on the 10th of September. All these birds were in immature plumage, and very fat. Their food had consisted principally of small insects.

Two female Water Rails were obtained at Hingham and Horning, December 26th, 1884. The females are much smaller

than the males. Their food consisted of aquatic insects and vegetable matter. On the 23rd of May a nest of seven fresh laid eggs were brought me from Hickling; and a live bird on the 28th of October that had been caught in a marsh drain leading into the Wensum near Norwich. It was apparently a male, and had eyes of a brick-red colour.

An adult Great Black-backed Gull was caught at Cromer by being entangled in some fishing gear, and was brought to me alive on December 16th, 1884. The irides were grey, speckled with fine irregular blotches of brown; the eyelids were of a beautiful reddish orange; gape of mouth same colour, but not quite so deep in tone. The upper mandible was yellow on the anterior half, pale horn on the basal half; lower mandible horn-colour, with fleshy tinge, with the red patch covering the anterior half at the sides, extreme tip pale horn-colour; legs, pale flesh colour, with a slight tinge of pink on the front of the tarsus.

Two small examples of the Bittern came to hand in January. The first, a male, was shot on the 19th at Aylsham by Mr. Purdy. It seemed very tame, allowing the shooter to approach within twenty-five yards of it before it took wing. It was very fat, and the stomach contained the remains of a water-beetle (*Dytiscus marginalis*), which, judging from previous dissections, seems a favourite prey. The second example, a female (also of smaller dimensions than usual) was killed near Lynn on the 26th. It weighed just 18 ounces, and measured $26\frac{1}{2}$ inches in total length, beak and tail included; $45\frac{1}{2}$ inches across the fully extended wings, and $12\frac{1}{4}$ in the wing from carpus.

Solitary individuals of the handsome Greenbacked Porphyrio, *Porphyrio chloronotus*, have been met with in Norfolk on five different occasions (see Mr. J. H. Gurney's note on the subject, *antea*, p. 71), and four out of the five were sent to me for preservation. The last procured (Zool. 1885, p. 482) was shot on October 16th, 1885, on the River Bure, near Horning, as it rose out of some reeds near one of the entrances to Hoveton Broad.

THE LATE CHARLES ROBERT BREE, M.D.

On the 17th October last at Long Melford, where he had resided since 1881, died Dr. Charles Robert Bree, in the 76th year of his age. Born at Ambleside in February, 1811, he commenced a study of medicine at York, and subsequently became a student in University College, London, ultimately settling down as a general practitioner at Stowmarket. In 1854 he was elected physician to the Essex and Colchester Hospital, and for twenty-two years continued senior physician to that institution, until in June, 1881, an attack of paralysis caused him to resign the post.

As an author he will be best remembered by his 'Birds of Europe not observed in the British Islands.' This work in four vols. royal octavo, with coloured plates, was commenced in 1859, and finished in 1863. Although by no means exhaustive, nor free from mistakes, it was a very useful book in its way, for until the appearance of Sharpe and Dresser's 'Birds of Europe,' in 1871, it remained for more than ten years the only English general work of reference on the subject of which it treated. The first edition having become exhausted, the author prepared a second, which appeared in 1875-1876, in five vols., important additions having necessitated the publication of an extra volume. In this second edition Dr. Bree was assisted by various friends who, as specialists, consented to revise the proof-sheets of different portions of the work for him, thus helping, so far as the text was concerned, to make it much superior to the first edition. In 1872 he published a volume of some 400 pages entitled "An Exposition of Fallacies in the Hypothesis of Mr. Darwin," the nature of which is sufficiently indicated by the title. A series of articles headed 'Popular Illustrations of the Lower Forms of Life,' originally contributed to the Natural History columns of the 'Field,' were afterwards collected and republished in book form. For many years he continued to take an active interest in the progress of Zoology, and from time to time forwarded communications for publication in the 'Field,' the 'Naturalist,' (no longer in existence), and 'The Zoologist.' Even when struck down by paralysis, and no longer able to enjoy the pleasures of a country walk, his active mind found occupation in closely observing the habits of such birds as might be

watched from his window; his latest contributions to this journal being 'Notes on Sparrows' (Zool. 1883, p. 297), and on 'Starlings' (Zool. 1884, p. 231). The study of Entomology, though to a less extent than Ornithology, likewise engaged his attention, and placed him in correspondence with observers all over the country who cultivated similar pursuits. His death, albeit at a ripe old age, and for some time not unexpected, will nevertheless be sincerely regretted by all who had the pleasure of knowing him either personally or through the medium of his writings.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

Animal Life in High Latitudes.—Professor Collett, of Christiania, has offered some criticism on the article which appeared under this heading in 'The Zoologist' for November last (pp. 385—320), and which we think deserves mention by way of supplement to our remarks. Referring to the statement on p. 387, that "Little Auks and Razorbills were common everywhere," Prof. Collett points out that the Little Auk is unknown during summer in Norway, where it is only a winter visitor. He adds that the enormous colony of Gulls at the famous Sverholts-Klubben (also mentioned on p. 387) consists entirely of *Larus tridactylus*, and not, as we supposed, of *Larus canus*. It may be as well to notice these corrections now, lest our statements may hereafter prove to be misleading.—S. O. and H. N. RIDLEY.

MAMMALIA.

Monkeys Swimming.—Whilst we were in the swimming-bath here (San Giuliano), May 23rd, "Pochette," the monkey which we had brought with us, put her fingers into the water and then licked them. Directly she had tasted the water she grew very restless, and at last dived into the bath with such force that she broke her cord and came swimming towards us. But she kept under water nearly the whole time, only coming to the surface to breathe and then diving again. She swims just like a human being or a frog, and keeps her eyes open under water, behaving, in fact, as if it were her natural element. We were very much surprised, as we did not know before that monkeys could or would swim. This monkey was bought at Archachon and the owner called it a "Bonnet Chinois." The colour of the hair is a golden grey, the chest pale blue; a slight tuft on the top of the head.—W. H. STEWART.

[The species of Monkey here referred to under the dealer's name of "Bonnet Chinois" is either *Macacus sinicus* or *M. pileatus*, probably the latter. The first-named inhabits Southern India, the other is confined to Ceylon.—ED.].

Present Distribution of the Beaver in Europe.—Since the publication of your article on "Beavers and their ways" in "The Zoologist" for July last (pp. 265—286), I have felt doubly interested in the existence of these animals on the River Elbe. At Mr. Honstetter's, taxidermist, at Bregenz (Lake of Constance), I had the pleasure of examining a Beaver, shot on that river only a short time ago (Aug. 1886). I ascertained that the animal had been sent to be stuffed, by Dr. Girtanner, of St. Gallen (Switzerland). On my writing to this gentleman, and referring to your paper, he was kind enough to send me some notes on the principal Beaver colonies on the Elbe, as well as the dates when the latest individuals from here were obtained. At the same time he forwarded a monograph on the subject, which I am again to forward to you. He mentions that the Beavers in Merseburg, Anhalt and Dessau, are still living and breeding, and tells me that since writing the said paper (1885) several small and hitherto unknown colonies have been discovered on the Bosna in Bosnia, in Ukraine, and in Transylvania. The Elbe colonies suffered very much through the drought of 1884, as the entrances to their holes along the river-bank were laid bare,—“was absolut für die Existenz des Bibers unerträglich ist.” Quoting from his paper sent herewith, the Beaver in Bavaria is now quite a thing of the past, and those in Bohemia appear to be not much better off. Especially interesting is his account—the result of many years of research—of the localities still affected by these animals in Scandinavia. The specimen I saw at Honstetter's was a large male, weighing twenty-three kilogrammes, and was shot the 7th August, 1886, near Roslau, on the Elbe. Last year he received two others, weighing respectively fifteen and thirteen kilogrammes, which were stuffed by the best taxidermist in Germany, Kerz of Stuttgart; he has also two skeletons,—all from the Elbe. As they are for sale, and the prices given, I may as well mention it here. Specimen at Honstetter's 250 fr., packing included; do. Kerz, 200 fr., do.; do. 200 fr.; large skeleton, 200 fr.; small do. 150 fr. I do not pretend to judge of the value, and only notice it here in case it may be of use to you; but as Dr. Girtanner himself says, the difficulty of obtaining *Castor fiber* now-a-days is very great, and only unusual floods or a stray shot from a poacher will cause them to abandon the colonies, which are strictly preserved. Dr. Girtanner appears also to be much interested in the former existence of Beavers in Scotland, and in the introduced colony in the Isle of Bute. As I am not acquainted with particulars, perhaps you would let him know something about the latter, either directly or through me. In conclusion, he states that he will be happy to supply any information or hints to any one desirous of establishing a Beaver colony.—G. N. DOUGLASS (Stephanien Strasse, 47, Karlsruhe).

[A full account of the Beaver in the Island of Bute, communicated by Mr. J. Black, the keeper in charge of them, will be found in 'Extinct British Animals,' by J. E. Harting, pp. 52—59.—ED.]

Do Stoats and Weasels kill Moles?—In reference to your editorial note on this subject (p. 457), Weasels are often caught in mole-traps in this neighbourhood, and I believe the general impression is that they are in pursuit of Moles at the time. I think Weasels probably only hunt for Field Mice in the old deserted runs, which the Mice would be more likely to use than those still frequented by the Moles, in which alone traps are set by Mole-catchers, and in which they would run the risk of falling victims to the fiery tempered and sometimes bloodthirsty "Want."—OLIVER V. APLIN (Great Bourton, near Banbury).

Pied Variety of the Short-tailed Field Vole.—A black and white variety of the Short-tailed Field Vole, *Arvicola agrestis*, was caught in a field on the Sewage Farm, Harrogate, on July 21st, by the local taxidermist, and is now in my possession.—FRANCIS R. FITZGERALD (Clifford House, Harrogate). [A black variety is recorded, p. 332.—ED.].

BIRDS.

New Species of Bullfinch from the Kurile Islands.—The ornithological collection in the British Museum has contained for many years a specimen of a Bullfinch, from the Kurile Islands, which is apparently undescribed. Mr. Seebohn also possesses a pair of the same bird, collected by Wossnessensky in the same place. The following is a brief description of the species:—*PYRRHULA KURILENSIS*, sp. n. Adult male; similar to the male of *P. orientalis* of Japan, but much lighter in colour, being pale ashy brown above instead of blue-grey, and pale drab brown below instead of blue-grey, but very faintly tinged with rosy on the breast. Total length 5.3 in., culmen 0.45 in., wing 3.5 in., tail 2.6 in., tarsus 0.7. (Type in Brit. Mus.). Adult female: Not to be distinguished from the female of *P. orientalis*. Total length 6 in., culmen 0.4 in., wing 3.25 in., tail 2.45 in., tarsus 0.7. (Mus. H. Seebohn). Hab. Kurile Islands.—R. BOWDLER SHARPE (Department of Zoology, British Museum).

A Nest of the Long-tailed Titmouse.—A nest about as big, or nearly so, as an Ostrich's egg, built chiefly of green moss, with perhaps a little hair woven in the interior, dappled over with lichen (or the slaty-grey growth found on old apple trees) on the outside, as if ornamentally; entrance about the middle of its height; the nest egg-shaped,—that is, oval,—with completed top and sides: the whole suspended by many strands of spiders' web to a small branch of a yew tree, the spiders' web threads being so closely and thickly used that they formed almost a small sheet of supports (like a balloon and its net if all were inverted and the net were made of very many strings). Each thread was apparently brought separately by the birds and thrown over the branch, and no tag ends or irregular ends appeared, the top of the nest being thus from one to two inches below the branch or twig. The nest was well sheltered in the tree.

One side of it was slightly torn, exposing the interior, evidently by a cat or some other animal. The old birds were not seen, and the nest when found was deserted, probably by reason of the mischief done by the animal, but evidently built recently.—F. BESANT (Sibsey Vicarage, Boston).

Swallow nesting in a Tree.—You may remember that in the summer of last year I wrote to you concerning a Swallow's nest built on a small tree-branch. You decided not to have the nest, but asked to be informed whether the birds returned this year to their curiously abnormal nesting-site. They have not returned, or at least they have not again built in the old place. It happened, however, that just as the Swallows first arrived here last April we had a few days of continued cold, rain, and storm; the birds were found dead in many instances hereabouts. I think that as many as six were found dead together in one spot, probably starved, as the insects were destroyed—or prevented from appearing—by the ungenial weather. Thus we cannot fairly conclude that the old nesting-place was not again sought. I may add that the young birds last year got off safely. When the tree—a horse-chestnut—lost its leaves in late autumn the rains and frosts soon caused the unsheltered nest to disappear, but before it fell I took a sketch, which fairly shows the position. I enclose the sketch, and of that you will make any use that you think fit. If formal authentication of the circumstances is considered desirable it can be amply supplied.—F. BESANT (Sibsey Vicarage, Boston). [Communicated by Dr. Günther, F.R.S.]

Birds which Sing at Night.—Gilbert White mentions three birds that sing at night, *viz.*, the Nightingale, Wood Lark, and Lesser Reed Sparrow (Sedge Warbler). Mr. Harting, in his edition of 'Selborne,' in a foot-note to this passage (p. 139), adds the Reed Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, and the Cuckoo. "The Sky Lark often sings very late, and the note of the Corn Crake may frequently be heard in May between 11 and 12 p.m." (*op. cit.*, Editor's note). The Rev. Dr. Benson ('Irish Song Birds,' p. 175) mentions another bird—the Nightjar. He also says, "The Song Thrush and Robin often sing at night. Mr. Arthur Irwin heard a Thrush in full song at 1.30 a.m. at Newtown Mountkennedy, on March 22nd, 1886." I can add another occasional night songster. On the 20th of March last I heard a Blackbird singing most delightfully from some evergreens near my bed-room window. The time was 12.40 a.m. Whether or not it was the light in my room that induced it to break into song I cannot say, but I never heard a Blackbird sing so late (or early) before or since. The Heron may often be seen and heard here about midnight. Many times I have listened to its harsh cry, delivered by the bird high up in the clear air, and afterwards seen it flying in the bright moonlight.—WILLIAM W. FLEMING (Coalfin House, Portlaoise, Co. Waterford).

Colouring on the Head of the Mute Swan.—In 'The Zoologist' for 1872 (p. 3112) there is a figure of a Mute Swan's head with markings on it like horns. There is on a pond at Hethersett, near Norwich, a Swan with markings exactly like this picture. They are orange-red in colour, and are the result of the tint so often seen on the occipital feathers of Swans commonly supposed to be an artificial stain from contact with ferruginous sands or other red deposit under the water, which in the present instance has assumed the strange shape of horns, as depicted in the woodcut above referred to.—J. H. GURNEY, jun. (Northrepps, Norwich).

Additions to the Avifauna of the Færoe Islands.—Through the kindness of Mr. Edward Hargitt, I have lately added to my collection two Reeves, *Machetes pugnax*, obtained by Herr H. C. Müller on the 29th September, 1884. The Ruff has occurred in Iceland, but I am not aware of its having been hitherto recorded from the Færoe Islands. In a letter lately received from Herr Müller, he informed Mr. Hargitt that an example of the Little Tern, *Sterna minuta*, had been obtained last summer in Færoe, which is likewise an addition to the Færoese avifauna.—H. W. FEILDEN (West House, Wells, Norfolk).

The Yellow-browed Warbler in Shetland.—An adult bird of the Yellow-browed Warbler, *Phylloscopus superciliosus*, occurred at the lantern of Somburgh Head lighthouse on the 25th September last. It was caught and forwarded to me for identification in the flesh, and is now in the collection at Dunipace House, preserved in spirits, as it was too far gone for skinning. It was sent by Mr. James Youngclaus, formerly lighthouse keeper at Monach Island, where, by his account, a precisely similar bird appeared on one occasion previously. It was in company with a few larks at the time of its striking.—J. A. HARVIE-BROWN (Dunipace, Larbert, N.B.).

Montagu's Record of the White-tailed Eagle in Shropshire.—Can any one help me to clear up the following mystery? Montagu, in his 'Ornithological Dictionary,' says that the *Sea Eagle* from which he took his description was killed by Sir Robert Lyttleton's keeper in Shropshire. On looking to see in what part of the county Sir Robert had property I cannot find that he existed. There is nobody of that name amongst the Baronets or Knights in 1792. In Plot's 'Staffordshire,' however, there is this curious statement—that two *Golden Eagles* were killed on Cannock Chase by Sir Edward Littleton's gamekeeper; and what is more odd, both authors say they were "feeding on a dead sheep." Yet one cannot imagine such an accurate man as Montagu, even if the species were the same, calling Sir Edward "Sir Robert" and placing Cannock Chase in Shropshire, especially as he says his specimen was accompanied by a 'letter from Sir Robert,' and therefore would have his signature attached.

Lord Valentia. too, who gave Montagu the Eagle, and who then lived at Anley Castle, near Bewdley, would at once have corrected his error in geography. I think in some edition of the 'Ornithological Dictionary' I have seen Stoke St. Milburgh mentioned as the place where the Eagle was shot, but I cannot find it. Are there any notes of localities where Montagu's specimens were obtained? Any hints on the subject will be very acceptable.—WILLIAM E. BECKWITH (Eaton Constantine, Iron Bridge, Salop).

Derivation of "Cob," a name for *Larus marinus*.—Referring to the remarks in 'Yarrell' (4th edit. vol. iv. p. 631) upon the use of the name "Cob" for *Larus marinus*, the name appears to have been very generally known formerly,—well enough, indeed, to find a place in two standard dictionaries. In Ainsworth's 'Thesaurus Linguae Latinæ Compendiarius,' Dr. Morrell's edition, 1783, we have "A cob or sea cob, *Larus*," and *Larus* is translated "A sea-mew, cob or gull." Also in the twenty-third edition of Boyer's "Royal Dictionary," abridged, we find "Sea-gull (cob), oiseau aquatique."—OLIVER V. APLIN (Great Bourton, near Banbury).

[The word "cob" appears to have a great many different meanings. Halliwell, in his 'Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words,' mentions no less than thirteen. The derivation of the word is given in Prof. Skeat's 'Etymological Dictionary of the English language,' q. v.—Ed.]

Black-headed Gull and Common Scoter in Skye.—By an oversight the Black-headed Gull, *Larus ridibundus*, was omitted from my recently printed 'Catalogue of the Birds of Skye' (Proc. Royal Phys. Soc. Edin. 1886, p. 118). It has been observed by me twice in the island, *i.e.*, in May, 1882, and July, 1886, a single bird being seen on each occasion. When writing the paper in question, I was unable to include the Common Scoter in our list, but have since received information of specimens shot by Mr. F. W. Johnson on Loch Bracadale.—H. A. MACPHERSON (3 Kensington Gardens Square, W.).

Storm Petrel in Gloucestershire.—On Oct. 17th my son picked up a Storm Petrel (*Procellaria pelagica*), which he found lying dead on a field-path between Witcomb and Crickly, about four miles east of Gloucester. It had doubtless been blown inland by the great gale on Oct. 15th. I find three previous records of this species in this county. In the 'Journal of a Naturalist' (1829) one is noted, presumably at Thornbury, "after a violent storm, All-hallows Eve, 1824." One was seen on the Gloucester and Berkeley Canal, by the late Mr. E. Bowley, a few years since, though as this specimen was not procured it may possibly have been *P. Leachii*. Another was picked up dead near Charlton Kings, and is now in the possession of Mr. J. P. Wilton-Haines, of this city, who has also become the possessor of the specimen now recorded. Leach's Petrel has also a triple

record: one shot at Maisemore several years ago, one picked up dead under the telegraph wires after a heavy gale in January, 1881, and a third shot on the canal in December, 1881.—H. W. MARSDEN (Gloucester).

The Plumage of the Red-crested Pochard.—The appearance of the young in down of *Fuligula rufigula* is not described in the last edition of Yarrell's 'British Birds.' Mr. Seebohm also was apparently unacquainted with it in this stage of plumage, as he cites a description, at second-hand, from Baldamus, which, if not actually incorrect, is at any rate decidedly misleading. Many readers of 'The Zoologist' have probably seen the fine pair of Red-crested Pochards at present living in the Zoological Society's Gardens, Regent's Park. These birds nested there during the past summer, and a single duckling was hatched on or about the 5th of June. The writer watched its growth for a fortnight, and admired the grace with which it captured midges, swimming rapidly to and fro in pursuit of them. The female displayed great jealousy of the drake, snapping her bill at him and driving him away from the young bird. The appended description of its appearance was taken from this young bird on June 12th:—Crown dark brown, this colour being continued in a narrow tapering band along the hind-neck; upper parts dark brown, a white spot on the pinion, another behind the pinion, and a third white spot on the thigh; a slight dark stripe extends through the eye; throat and sides of the neck yellowish, under parts apparently buffy white, probably purest on the abdomen. It will thus be seen that Mr. Seebohm's assumption ('British Birds,' vol. iii. p. 570), that the young has only two pale spots above, is inconsistent with the phase exhibited by this living specimen. It may be interesting to add, that the sex of the downy young of this bird is evidenced even when very young, by the colour of the bill. This bird, a male, had a *reddish* bill like its male parent, even when in down, contrasting with the brown bill of the old duck.—H. A. MACPHERSON (3, Kensington Gardens Square).

Tree Sparrow and Starling in Arran More.—During last May I saw a colony of Starlings breeding in one spot among the cliffs at Arran More. I noticed no birds of this species elsewhere for many miles, and they were strange birds to the natives of the island to whom I referred; they knew them only as "Blackbirds." The Tree Sparrow I remarked repeatedly, always near the same spot. I doubt if I saw more than one pair, which frequented the roof of a cabin and the adjoining fields. The House Sparrow is abundant on the island, and was the only Sparrow seen in County Donegal between Strabane and the sea. I found the Red-throated Diver breeding on the mainland (Co. Donegal), but this I think you recorded last year.—H. M. WALLIS (The Lawn, Reading).

The Siskin a Resident in Co. Wicklow.—I have observed that the Siskin (*Carduelis spinus*) remains throughout the year in this county in

considerable numbers. I noticed a pair of them on May 21st, building their nest at the extremity of a lofty pine branch. It was extremely difficult of access, being no less than fifty feet from the ground, and when I eventually succeeded in reaching it, I found that it had been plundered by Magpies. Subsequently, however, I saw several young Siskins, lately flown from the nest. The song of the male bird is very curious, and is frequently uttered on the wing, as the bird hovers and flutters in a manner similar to the Greenfinch. Since the beginning of the autumn the number of Siskins has largely increased, considerable flocks having arrived from the north.—ALLAN ELLISON (Shillelagh, Co. Wicklow).

Blackcap and Grasshopper Warbler in Wicklow.—The Blackcap is not uncommon in the woods about here, and was more numerous this year than before. I frequently heard and saw the birds in Coollattin Wood, and have watched the male in the early morning sitting on top of one of the small trees in a young plantation, and uttering his fine warble for a considerable time. I have heard him repeat with precision the notes of the Thrushes which were singing close by. On April 27th I noticed the appearance of the Grasshopper Warbler in this locality. The bird is a regular summer migrant here, but very local and sure to escape notice if not closely watched for. On the above-mentioned date I saw several of the birds, being attracted by their whirring notes, among the furze on an uncultivated hill side. They did not, however, make any stay in this spot, but apparently removed to the swampy valley along the River Derry, where they may be heard occasionally through the summer, especially where there are thick furze clumps.—ALLAN ELLISON (Shillelagh, Co. Wicklow).

Ring Ouzel Breeding on the Malvern Hills.—I first observed these birds here on the 27th of August—earlier by a fortnight than reported by Mr. W. Edwards, a naturalist long resident in the place. They were feeding on the berries of the mountain-ash, high up the hill. Though seated within a few yards of the trees, they continued to alight, with a flight sweeping and rapid. The berries were greedily devoured, the trees on the hill-side being speedily stripped. The Ouzels now frequent the plantations near the town, and have a screeching alarm-note when disturbed. They have been known to build here, Mr. Edwards having found the nest in the furze, high on the hill. Though a little larger than that of the Blackbird, it is alike in shape and material; and the eggs are the same, except having a few red spots at the broad end. Comparatively few Ouzels visited the hills, I am told, before the planting of the mountain-ash, which is now a common tree in these parts. A stray bird or two of this species has been observed here during winter.—HENRY HADFIELD (Ventnor).

The Tawny Pipit and Citril Finch at Brighton.—Three Tawny Pipits (*Anthus campestris*) were caught on the downs to the north-east of

Brighton, about the beginning of October last. They were all secured by the same bird-catcher at the same place on different days. On October 14th a Citril Finch was caught near the race-course. This bird is still alive, in the possession of Mr. Swaysland, Upper Russell Street, Brighton.—HERBERT LANGTON (115, Queen's Road, Brighton).

A White-tailed Robin.—On the 18th of October last I saw a Robin with a completely white tail. The bird was tame enough to allow me a fairly long and close inspection, and with the exception of the tail, every feather of which appeared to be white, the colour of the bird was normal.—E. P. LARKEN (Gatton Tower, Reigate).

MOLLUSCA.

Experiments to test the Strength of Snails.—Perceiving a Common Snail (*Helix aspersa*) crawling up the window-blind one evening, it occurred to me that I would try what weight it could draw after it perpendicularly. Accordingly I attached to its shell four reels of cotton which happened to lie on the table, fastening one after another, until I ascertained that a greater load would exceed the limit of its strength. I then weighed the entire load and found it to be two ounces and a quarter, while the snail itself weighed only a quarter of an ounce. Thus it was able to lift perpendicularly nine times its own weight! I then made an experiment with another and somewhat larger snail, which weighed about one-third of an ounce, the load being composed chiefly of the same materials as the last, but so placed as to be drawn in a horizontal position on the table. Reels of cotton to the number of twelve were fastened to it, with the addition of a pair of scissors, a screwdriver, a key, and a knife, weighing altogether seventeen ounces, or fifty-one times the weight of the snail. The same snail, on being placed on the ceiling, was able to travel with four ounces suspended from its shell. I next tried it on a piece of common thread, suspended and hanging loose, with another snail of its own weight, which it carried up the thread with apparent ease. After this I tried it on a single horse-hair strained in a horizontal position, but it had then enough to do to crawl over this narrow bridge without a load.—E. SANDFORD (The Gardens, Dale Park, Arundel).

ARCHÆOLOGY.

A Christmas Bill of Fare in 1800.—In a collection of miscellanea relating to inns and their signs, formed by a certain Mr. G. Creed, and now preserved in the British Museum, I found a curious document headed "Bush Inn [Bristol], Bill of Fare for Christmas, 1800." It is, I think, well worth reproduction, as showing the variety of fish, game, and wildfowl which was procurable during the winter months at the commencement of the

present century. The list runs as follows :—1 Bustard, Red Game, Black Game, 1 Turtle (120 lbs.), 1 Land Tortoise, 72 Pots Turtle (different prices), [9 kinds of soup], 3 Turbots, 4 Cods, 2 Brills, 2 Pipers, 12 Dories, 2 Haddocks, 14 Rockfish, 18 Carp, 12 Perch, 4 Salmon, 12 Plaice, 17 Herrings, Sprats, 122 Eels, Saltfish, 78 Roach, 98 Gudgeons, 1 Dried Salmon, Venison (1 haunch hevier, 5 haunches doe, 5 necks, 10 breasts, 10 shoulders), 42 Hares, 17 Pheasants, 41 Partridges, 87 Wild Ducks, 17 Wild Geese, 37 Teal, 31 Wigeon, 16 Bald Coots, 2 Sea Pheasants, 3 Mews [? Gulls], 4 Moorhens, 2 Water Drabs, 7 Curlews, 2 Bitterns, 81 Woodcocks, 149 Snipes, 17 Wild Turkies 18 Golden Plovers, 1 Swan, 5 Quests [Woodpigeons], 2 Land Rails, 13 Galenas [Guineafowl], 4 Peahens, 1 Peacock, 1 Cuckoo [!], 116 Pigeons, 121 Larks, 1 Sea Magpye [Oystercatcher], 127 Stares [Starlings], 208 small birds, 44 Turkies, 8 Capons, 19 Ducks, 10 Geese, 2 Owls [!], 61 Chicken, 4 Ducklings, 11 Rabbits, 3 pork griskins, 11 veal burrs, 1 roasting Pig, Oysters, stew'd and collop'd, eggs, Hog's pudding, ragoo'd feet and ears, scotch'd collops, veal chops, harricoed mutton, Maintenon chops, pork chops, mutton chops, rumpsteaks, joint steaks, pinbone steaks, sausages, Hambro' sausages, tripe, Cow heels, knotlings, 5 house Lambs, Veal (3 legs and loins, 2 breasts and shoulders, 2 heads), beef (5 rumps, 3 sirloins, 5 rounds, 2 pieces of 5 ribs each, 7 pinbones), Dutch and Hambro'd beef, mutton (8 haunches, 8 legs, 8 necks, 11 loins, 6 saddles, 6 chines, 5 shoulders), pork (4 legs, 4 loins, 4 chines, sparibs, half a porker), *Cold* : 1 Boar's head, 1 baron beef, 2 hams, 4 tongues, 6 chicken, Hog's feet and ears, 7 collars brawn, 2 rounds of beef, collared veal, do. beef, do. mutton, do. Eels, do. Pig's head, Dutch tongues, Bologna sausages, Paraguay pies, French pies, mutton pies, Pigeon pies, venison pasty, sulks [?], 430 mince pies, 13 tarts, jellies, crawfish, pickled Salmon, Sturgeon, pickled Oysters, potted Partridges, Lobsters, 52 barrels Byfleet and Colchester Oysters. Milford and Tenby Oysters, 4 pine apples. It will thus be seen that there were eighteen kinds of fish and forty kinds of birds included in this comprehensive *menu*. Among the latter, the most extraordinary are certainly the Cuckoo and the two Owls. The document is marked "Unique—£1 1s.," also "Very rare and curious." It seems to have been purchased at Hone's sale. "The Bush" was long the principal inn in Bristol, but has long since disappeared.—MILLER CHRISTY (Chignal St. James, Chelmsford).

[The difficulty of procuring a "Cuckoo" at Christmas casts a doubt upon this item. The name is probably a misprint for "Curlew"; and "2" owls" coming between "Geese" and "Chicken," should doubtless be read "Fowls." Who would eat two Owls and a Cuckoo at Christmas, even if he could get them?—ED].

SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES.

LINNEAN SOCIETY OF LONDON.

November 4.—WILLIAM CARRUTHERS, F.R.S., President, in the chair.

The President, in welcoming the Fellows to the first meeting of the new session, made some remarks on the work which had been done during the recess, and in a passing tribute commented on the loss which Science and the Society had sustained by the decease of Mr. G. Busk, a former Secretary and Vice-President of the Society.

The President afterwards drew attention to stained specimens, under the microscope, of phosphorescent organisms (chiefly *Ceratium tripos*) obtained by him in the Firth of Clyde in September last.

Mr. John Murray, in commenting thereon, observed that near Cumbræ Islands an immense quantity of yellow material containing these organisms in abundance was obtained at every haul of the net. He alluded to his own observation of the species in long chains in the ocean (Narr. Voy. of 'Challenger'), and to Klebs' opinion of *Ceratium* being a genus of unicellular Algæ, and not an infusorian animal, as ordinarily inferred.

Dr. F. Day exhibited a Salmon Parr twenty months old, raised at Howietown from parents which had never visited the sea. Dr. Day also showed some coloured drawings made in October, 1886, at Howietown, of hybrids raised there. One of these was a cross between the American Charr and the Loch Leven Trout, another a cross between the American and the British Charr, and a third between the last-mentioned hybrid and the Loch Leven Trout; all these were fertile.

Mr. F. P. Pascoe exhibited one of the round olive-green balls from Sicily, formed by the action of the sea on fragments of the *Posidonia caulinia*, and reduced after a few days' exposure to a flat cake-like body densely covered with minute crystals of salt. He also exhibited examples of a remarkable mode of growth of the acorn-shell (*Balanus*). It would appear that several individual animals had united their shells to form a tube common to them; the outer valves of each individual also had more or less lengthened, forming a series of irregular subsidiary tubes radiating from the apex of the primary one.

Mr. Edward C. Bousfield read a paper "On the Natural History of the Genus *Dero*." After a summary of the literature, and remarks on the confusion existent in the nomenclature, he showed that *Naias digitata* of Müller cannot now be identified, and the specific name should accordingly be rejected. A full account is given of the habits of the Deros, and the best methods of observing them; the points in which they differ from the Naides were pointed out, and the chief peculiarity of the genus described,

viz., the respiratory apparatus at the end of the tail. Mr. Bousfield then gave the diagnoses of seven species, of which all are figured, four being new to Science.

Mr. Stuart O. Ridley read a paper "On the Genus *Lophopus*, with Description of a New Species from Australia." The latter was obtained by Dr. Von Lendenfeld near Sydney, N.S.W., and is distinguished from *L. crystallinus* chiefly by the great length of the tentacles, which equal that of the body of the polypide, and by the oval non-pointed outline of the statoblast. The new form, *L. Lendenfeldi*, is the fourth fresh-water Polyzoön recorded from Australia, and the first species of its genus satisfactorily determined from the Southern Hemisphere. Staining with borax-carminé brings out certain multipolar nucleated cells in the ectocyst, which appear not to have been previously described in this genus. They perhaps indicate that the ectocyst contains mesodermal elements, and hence is something more than a mere epithelium. The characters of the species in question necessitate a modification of the old diagnosis of the genus as regards the shape of the statoblast.—J. MURIE.

ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

November 3, 1886.—ROBERT M'LACHLAN, Esq., F.R.S., President, in the chair.

The following gentlemen were elected Fellows, *viz.*, Mr. Peter Cameron, of Sale, Cheshire; Mr. F. Archer, of Crosby, Liverpool; Mr. H. J. S. Pryer, of Yokohama, Japan; Mr. H. Norris, of St. Ives, Hunts; Mr. N. P. Fenwick, of Surbiton Hill; Mr. John Brown, of Cambridge; Mr. J. P. Tutt, of Blackheath; and Mr. A. P. Green, of Colombo, Ceylon.

Mr. E. B. Poulton exhibited a mass of minute crystals of formate of lead, caused by the action of the secretion of the larva of *Dicranura vinula* upon suboxide of lead. He stated that a single drop of the secretion had produced the crystals which were exhibited; and he called attention to the excessively high percentage of formic acid which must be present in the secretion, and to the pain, and probable danger, which would result from being struck in the eye by the fluid which the larva had the power of ejecting to a considerable distance. A discussion ensued, in which Messrs. White, Kirby, Slater and others took part.

Mr. S. Stevens exhibited a specimen of *Laphygma exigua*, recently captured by Mr. Rogers in the Isle of Wight.

Mr. W. F. Kirby exhibited, and read notes on, a specimen of *Perilampus maurus*, Walk., recently bred by Mr. Walter de Rothschild from *Antheræa tirrhea*, Cram., one of the rarer South African Saturnidæ.

Mr. T. W. Hall exhibited a number of specimens of *Xanthia fulvago* (*cerago*), somewhat remarkable in their variation, and showing a nicely

graduated series, extending from the pale variety *flavescens* of Esper, to an almost melanic form.

Mr. Boyd exhibited, and made remarks on, the larva of a species of *Ornithoptera* from New Guinea.

Mr. H. Goss exhibited a series of *Bankia argentula* collected by him in Cambridgeshire, in June last; and also, for comparison, a series of specimens of the same species taken at Killarney in June, 1877. It appeared that the Irish form of the species was larger and more brightly coloured than the English form.

Mr. Eland Shaw exhibited a female specimen of *Dectictus verrucivorus* (Linn.), taken in July last, at St. Margaret's Bay, Kent.

Mr. Waterhouse recorded the recent capture of *Deiopeia pulchella* at Ramsgate, by Mr. Buckmaster; and the capture of *Anosia plexippus* at Gibraltar was also announced.

Mr. J. W. Slater read a paper on "The relations of insects to flowers," in which he stated that many flowers which gave off agreeable odours appeared not so attractive to insects as some other less fragrant species; and he stated that Petunias, according to his observations, were comparatively neglected by bees, butterflies and Diptera. Mr. Distant, Mr. Stainton, Mr. Weir, Mr. Stevens and the President took part in the discussion which ensued, and stated that in their experience Petunias were often most attractive to insects. Mr. Stainton referred to the capture by himself, of sixteen specimens of *Sphinx convolvuli* at the flowers of Petunias, in one evening in 1846.

Jonkeer May, the Dutch Consul-General, asked whether the reported occurrence of the Hessian Fly (*Cecidomyia destructor*) in England had been confirmed. In reply Mr. McLachlan stated he believed that several examples of an insect thought to be the Hessian Fly had been bred in this country, but that everything depended upon correct specific determination in such an obscure and difficult genus as *Cecidomyia*.—H. Goss, *Secretary*.

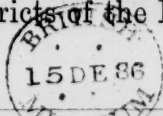
NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.


Avifauna Italica. Elenco delle specie di Uccelli stazionarie o di passaggio in Italia, colla loro sinonimia volgare e con notizie più specialmente intorno alle migrazioni ed alla nidificazione. Compilato dal Dottore ENRICO HILLYER GIGLIOLI. 8vo. Firenze, 1886.

It is now some fifteen years since Count Salvadori published his work on the birds of Italy, a work which has been of the

utmost utility to all students of the avifauna of Southern Europe. Since that time the learned ornithologist of Turin has been occupied with the study of the birds of far-distant countries; the enterprise of Italian naturalists in various quarters of the globe having furnished material for several books of the greatest scientific importance. The interest attaching to the Ornithology of Italy has, however, not been lost sight of in that country, and the pleasing task of forming a standard collection of Italian birds has been a labour of love to Professor Giglioli, of Florence, the results of whose studies are now given to the world in a bulky volume of 600 pages.

This work has been published under the auspices of the Italian Minister of Agriculture, Industry, and Commerce, and is one of the most important contributions to the ornithological literature of the day. Although primarily written for his countrymen, as a guide to the study of their own birds, the work will have a further significance, as it embodies the most complete catalogue of the birds of Italy yet published, and gives most careful details of the distribution and migrations of the species which visit that country. The Italian zoological region embraces, according to Professor Giglioli, not only the peninsula of Italy, but the islands adjacent, such as Malta, Linosa, Lampedusa, Lampione, and Pantellaria. These, with Sardinia and Sicily, form the insular province of the Italian region. The continental or northern province comprehends the Alps, Piedmont, Ticino, Lombardy, Emilia, Venice, Trentino, Istria, and the coast and islands of Dalmatia. On the west it follows the Apennines to the Maritime Alps, and on the east terminates on the Adriatic near Rimini and Pesaro. The rest of Italy with Corsica forms the Peninsular or southern province. Of the 443 species of Birds recorded as Italian, 207 are residents, 69 are summer and 36 spring visitants, 9 of regular passage, 8 of irregular passage, 28 of uncertain occurrence, 80 occasional stragglers, and 6 are doubtful. Great care has been bestowed on the collection of vernacular names, and altogether this work will be recognised as an authoritative volume on one of the most interesting districts of the Palæarctic Region.






THIRD SERIES.]

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EDITED BY

J. E. HARTING, F.L.S., F.Z.S.



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